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The Christ, Property and Man

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INTRODUCTORY.

There are times in human history when nothing but the boldest, plainest, bravest utterances of the truth can save civlization from irreparable loss. The struggle against negro slavery in this country fifty years ago, was such a time, and its deepest feeling was well portrayed by Lowell, when he wrote:

> Let us speak plain; there is more force in names
> Than most men dream of; and a lie may keep
> Its throne a whole age longer, if it skulk
> Behind the shield of some fair-seeming name.
> Let us call tyrants, TYRANTS, and maintain
> That only freedom comes by the grace of God,
> And all that comes not by His grace must fall;
> For men in earnest have no time to waste
> In patching fig leaves for the naked truth.

The present is such a time, and he is wise who can discern the fact. We are, today, face to face with the gravest problems that ever challenged the thought and energy of men. It is no exaggeration to say so—nor is it strange, Human progress is cumulative and must inevitable create grave problems. If we are to meet these problems of our time like men, we shall need to be sure that we are using agencies that are adequate to our task. We must not—

> Attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted key.

There is, in this world one institution to which men have been accustomed to look for light and leadership and they have not always looked in vain. That institution is the Christian Church. But the conviction is growing that the Christian Church is not awake to these grave social problems which are now demanding solution that it has neither eyes to see nor ears to hear nor tongue to speak the gospel for which the whole world waits.

This little booklet contains one of the clearest, truest, bravest words that has been my lot to read. It is a message to the Christian Church of the twentieth century—as necessary and as freighted with deep and solemn import as any message to the Church of the first century. No minister or member of the Christian Church can afford to be indifferent to the words of this faith-

ful prophet of truth. His appeal is to the very charter of the the Church. He has indicted the Christian civilization of the nineteenth century with apostasy from the teachings of Christ. That indictment must be faced.

But he has done more than that. He has pointed out the way along which the Church can go to a future of a far greater service that it has known hitherto—the path along which is must surely go to take its place along side those relics and curiosities of past ages which human progress has cast up high and dry on the shores of time. No true soul can read these pages without echoing the words with which this introduction closes: God speed this brave gospel of a true religion!

WILLIAM THURSTON BROWN.

THE CHRIST, PROPERTY AND MAN.

HAVE to write today of something which has long been on my heart. I was formerly a Christian preacher, and though my convictions will no longer permit me to occupy a pulpit, still the subjects belonging to a religious calling must ever hold first place in my interest, and it is to speak out on these that I now address myself.

For many pears during my ministry I was haunted by a sad perplexity at the small success of Christianity. Nearly nineteen hundred years have passed, I reflected, since the Son of God came upon the earth to teach men the laws of life here below and salvation after death, and yet we see around us very little evidence that men have followed this teaching in their conduct here on earth, while what becomes of them hereafter we know not, nor have we ever known, and are no nearer to knowing than we have ever been. Surely, if this teaching had been really divine, and if it had originated in the fiat of the Omnipotent Creator of this Universe, whose will it was that it should thrive, and if all the energy and love and blood and tears poured out during all these centuries by the hosts of priests and clergy, saints and martyrs, had been well directed—surely, if all these things were true and valid—we should have more to show for it than we have in our present civilization.

I know that you will point to me the various achievements of Christianity, but I cannot see them in such glowing light. You tell me of munificent charities, but there were always rich men who were lavishly generous with wealth they did not need. You tell me of the growth of intelligence; but I recall Athens and her intellectual splendors, before ever Christianity appeared. An En-

glish scholar has declared that the average intelligence of an Athenian audience assembled to hear one of the dramas of Aeschylus was higher than that of the British house of commons, though the one consisted of the ordinary populace, and the other of picked men. You point to me the virtues of the people, their industry, honesty, truthfulness, kindness, courage. But I say men toiled and told the truth, and loved and paid their debts, and enjoyed the pleasures of good fellowship, before ever Christ was thought of. You tell me of the great mechanical inventions. Ah! there I grant you, great advances have been made. But these are nothing to do with the Christian teaching. Christ did not encourage invention and mechanics. He had nothing to say about the righteousness of electric motors, or the holiness of steam engines, or the sanctity of rapid transit. So far from encouraging or foreseeing our present enormous increase in material comforts and appliances, he invariably inculcated the barest simplicity of living. He did not even favor industry, but often took occasion to urge his followers to look contemptuously upon the service of the body, and according to it mere necessities, to live fully the life of the spirit. The material growth of modern wealth production receives no inspiration from the teachings of Christ; it has nothing in common with him, and, indeed, runs counter to the deepest spirit of His life and thought. Do not, then, designate it as one of the achievements of Christianity. Again, I grant you that in general average living there has been a gain. Men are more gentle, perhaps; to be sure, they still fight, and go to war, and murder, and burn, and rape, and lie, and steal, and blaspheme, and plot, and boast, and cringe, and scorn, and hate; they still do all these things, but perhaps they do not do them so much—perhaps not quite so often—as formerly. Modern civilization has moved northward, for one thing, into a more temperate clime, where the blood is cooler and flows a little more slowly. Men have become more nervous from the indoor life necessitated by this change and from the friction of intense competition in the struggle for existence. Their more sensitive nerves restrain them in these days from many sins of violence, and they are gentler.

But what if the gain had been greater still? Surely the discipline of generation after generation through eighteen hundred years, the daily piling up and handing on of human experience, would work out a steady, though slow, improvement? If Christ had never ap-

peared, would not men in the mere exercise of living together for eighteen hundred years have slowly learned forbearance, truth, honesty, and the other civic virtues? Where, then, shall we look for the vast accretion of morality and well being which a divine religion conferred upon the world by the sacrifice of a Divine Being, and hallowed by the sanctifying benedictions of the Supreme Father Himself justifies us in expecting to find? I find only a vast disproportion between the promises of this force and its actual results.

While I was living for some years under the shadow this perplexity, it occurred to me to make once more a careful examination of the teachings of Christ, and their relations to the world of today. I will indicate as briefly as I can some of the conclusions to which I came.

In the first place, I found that Christ recognizes that man leads two lives—the life within and the life without—corresponding to two parts of his nature, his individuality and his social nature; and first having to do with his single soul, that consciousness which each man has to himself, which no other can know, which he never succeeds in expressing, which he spends his life in trying himself to penetrate, and never quite does, (though in prayer and love, and poetry and music, he comes nearest) which came with him into the world and will go out with him. This is his individuality, his own special, private existence—that which makes him a unit. On the other hand, man is associated with his fellows in society, and the life of relation with them is the other part of his being.

Christ's teachings may be divided broadly into two distinct chapters, dealing with the individual soul and with the social soul.

The subject matter of the first, belongs, I believe, to the domain of aesthetics; it deals with what is beautiful, with the fair, harmonious, the gracious, the pleasing. It is Art; the Art of the soul-forming—to use an absurd word, let us say, the Art of Soulfulness. If you wish to study sculpture you will be shown how to mould clay into forms of beauty; if you wish to draw, you will be taught what lines are ugly, what proportions beautiful; if you wish to study music you must learn how to make beautiful notes; if you wish to dance, you must be able to make beautiful motions and take beautiful attitudes; for composing you must know how to make beautiful combinations of notes.

Christ was the great Soul Composer. He made a beautiful sym-

phronic Soul in His own person. After that, being enamored of Soul music, and finding that the solo of His own Soul was not enough, He went about teaching all that would listen to Him how they, too, should form a beautiful soul in themselves. His methods were those of the great art teachers always. He corrected, improved, inspired, scolded, threatened, rebuked, caressed, fascinated. Occasionally, worn out with His labors, He retired into solitude, and again emerging, dazzled His pupils anew with fresh beauties of His spiritual art. He taught them postures, gestures, movements of the soul, saying this attitude (humility, purity, meekness, patience, gentleness) is beautiful (good); that attitude of gesture (hate, greed, violence) is ugly (bad).

We all know the method by which He inculcated His psychologic aesthetics. The directions of His code are our religion. "Be not anxious. Fear not. Consider the lilies of the field. Be serene, confident. Have faith. Seek the kingdom and all shall be added to you. Take no thought for the morrow. Do not covet. Be meek. Forgive your enemies. I have given you an example. Imitate me. I am the way, the truth and the life. I am the light. Follow me. Avoid care. Leave the dead to bury the dead. Let not your heart be troubled. Do good on the Sabbath day, and any day. Do not bother about conventions. Be pure of heart. Worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Come unto me when ye are weary, and I will give you rest. Cast your burdens upon me. Be assured and easy. Love God. The Kingdom of heaven is within you. Be beautiful. Be lovely."

All these mandates are addressed to the individual soul. They have poured deep bliss upon countless millions who have received and believed them. They have refreshed the weary, uplifted the downhearted, strengthened the weak. They appeal to he very essence of personality, the kernal, the ego, whose struggling flame seems often about to be quenched in the flood of this world's care and sorrows. The flame revives at the teaching. "I, I, I am," the ego cries. "I am loved. I am cared for and cherished. I shall some day be recognized. My reward shall come." Though the world ignore me and despise me and pass over my prostrate form, yet Christ's eye is upon me. He will care for me. He remembers. He knows all. Blessed comfort!" Again the individual soul, dazzled by the beauty of His, resolves anew to imitate its master.

And so in these ways, from the emotional, the personal side, the teachings of Christ in so far as they appeal to the individual, private life, ave worked day by day through the ages, their miracles of help and blessing.

For they could be received under all circumstances. No matter what the environment of the individual, he could receive these teachings and believe and follow them. The more wretched his condition, the more deeply did they take hold on him, and yet no persons were so high that grief and disappointment did not reach them, and then they, too, drank at the same fountain.

This is all I have to say about this part of Christ's teachings.

But there was another portion, and of this I shall speak more vigorously.

Christ recognized that man is not only a "soul to be saved," as evangelists say, but a social animal having relations with his fellows. And it was to the just regulation of these relations that He delivered another portion of his message

And it is this part which men have neither obeyed nor believed. I say they have not believed it. I say this because if they really had believed (think what that word means) that these orders had been given them by God Almighty through the lips of His Son (what a conception this is!) they would not have dared disobey them. Yet they do openly, deliberately, consciously and collectively disobey them.

They do not believe them.

They may say they do. They may bow their heads and recite their creeds. They may think they do. They may even believe that they believe. They may build churches and pay clergymen to tell them to believe, and how to do it, and assure them that they do believe. They do not believe.

Though they have the tongues of angels and sing hosannas to the high heavens.

They do not believe.

I say that they do not believe in the validity of these commandments. I say that they show that they do not believe them, because they do not obey them. I say that they do not obey them because they cannot. I say that Christians today live in the midst of an economic system which forbids them to live the life Christ bade them live. It not only forbids—it prevents them. It will kill

them if they attempt it, and self-preservation is the first law of nature.

I have collected the sayings of Christ which go to make up His social code. Let us see these all together and then take them up one by one.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.—Mark xii, 28.

Love your enemies.—Matt. v, 43

Go sell what thou hast and give to the poor.—Mark x, 17; Matt. xix, 21.

Take no thought for the morrow what ye shall eat and what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed.—Matt. vi, 25.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth.—Matt. vi, 19.

Do not attempt to serve God and Mammon.—Matt. vi, 19.

Woe unto you that are rich.—Luke vi, 20.

A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth.—Luke xii, 15.

Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.—Matt. v, 42.

It is more blessed to give than to receive.—Acts xx, 35.

This poor widow cast in more than all they which are casting into the treasury; for they all did cast in of their superfluity but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.—Mark xii, 41.

Resist not him that is evil. To him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other; and from him that taketh away thy cloak withhold not thy coat also.—Matt. v, 38-41; Luke vi, 29.

He that is without sin among you let him cast the first stone. —John viii, 3.

Forgive thy brother seven times a day.—Luke xvii, 4.

Pay equal wages. (The parable of the laborers.) "It is my will to pay the last laborers who worked one hour just as much as those who worked all day."—Matt. xx, 1.

Forgive thy brother seven times a day.—Luke vvii, 4.

Who so would be great among you shall be your servant.—Luke xxii, 25; Matt. xx, 26; Mark x, 44; Matt. xxiii, 21; Mark ix, 35.

Who is my mother and my brethren? And looking round on

them which sat round about Him, He said, behold my mother and my brethren.—Mark iii, 21.

What God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Whosoever shall put away his wife and shall marry another committeth adultery. (Thou shalt not commit adultery.) And he that marryeth her when she is put away committeth adultery.—Matt. xix, 3.

Swear not at all. But let your speech be yea, yea, nay, nay; and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one.—Matt. v, 23; James v, 12.

See that ye despise not one of these little ones.—Matt. xviii, 10.

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you even so do ye also unto them.—Matt. vii, 12.

Now when I say that these commandments are not obeyed, some one may reply: "Neither are any laws obeyed by every one." That here and there an exceptional individual does not believe in them, defies or breaks them, does not prove that the laws are not in general respected and obeyed."

But that criticism is not applicable to the body of Christ's social laws which I have presented above. They are not broken and denied by here and there an individual, exceptionally miscreant or criminal. They are broken and defied by everybody, i. e, by society as a whole.

Society as a whole disobeys deliberately and frankly every one of the canons of Christ's social code.

Moreover it has incorporated its defiance into civil statutes which are upheld by church, clergy, bench, jury, court, and private conscience.

This civil code, with deliberate forethought, defies and derides the social canons of Christ.

Christ orders one thing. It throws insuperable obstacles in the way of the execution of His commands.

He forbids certain things. It says: "You may do them if you like. Never mind him; ask me; I'm the authority."

Christ says: "Woe unto you that are rich."

It says: "It's a very fine thing to be rich"

Christ says: "Give to him that asketh."

It says: "Impossible. Join a charity organization instead."

Christ says: "From him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away."

It says: "Not without good security at 6 per cent."

Christ says: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

It says: "Get all you can."

Christ says: "You cannot serve God and Mammon."

It says: "That's easy—God Sundays, Mammon week days."

Christ says: "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

It says: "Look out for A No. 1 first."

Christ says: "Take no thought for tomorrow."

It says: "Save, save, save, and put in the savings bank."

Christ says: "To him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other."

It says: "Call a policeman and have him arrested for assault."

Christ says: "From him that taketh away thy cloak, withhold not thy coat also."

It says: "Telephone for a detective, catch him that taketh away thy cloak and jail him for burglary."

Christ says: "Forgive your debtors."

It says: "Sue them and recover with damages if you can."

Christ says: "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone."

It says: "Choose judges that know the law; never mind about their private sins."

Christ says: "Whosoever would be great among you let him be your servant."

It says: "Whosoever would be a gentleman among you, let him keep twenty servants but not be one."

Christ says: "What God has joined together let no man put asunder."

It says: "We'll put you asunder any time you like, and you may marry again without committing adultery, either."

Christ says: "Swear not at all."

It says: "Prisoner, witness, lift up your right hand. Do you solemnly swear?" etc.

Christ says (looking round about him): "These are my mother and brethren." (All good persons, without regard to ties of blood.)

It says: "Next to yourself, look after your own family."

Christ says: "See that ye despise not one of these little ones."

It says: "You can't look after all the ragtail kids; you have your own family to care for."

Christ says: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them."

It says—well, it generally says nothing to this. A shrug of the shoulders is the only answer.

Now, what is IT which hurls in this way defiance at the Lord Christ and His gentle commands? I have said society does his, but society is professedly Christian. How can it be Christian and yet deny and repudiate Christian teaching? Is it not rather some particular element or force or condition in this society which makes for this opposition? It is perhaps our old mediaeval friend, his satanic majesty, the devil? No, we gave him up long ago. This is some plain, everyday, tangible entity; some factor in our life which yields enormous power; some influence strong enough to make us overthrow our dearest Christian ideals; strong enough to make us mock them for impossible dreams; to make us scoff and revile and crush them, even as the Jews did the divine inculcator of them.

This force is nothing other than the bread and butter question; it is the question of food, shelter, and the necessities of life; it is the practical, material elements of life, moving in a certain order (our economic system) which is the powerful current running directly counter to Christ's teachings. He teaches one code and it teaches another. He has nothing to offer as a premium but promises of eternal joy in the life to come. It has the promise of comfort in this.

In this eighteen-century old war waged between them, IT has won every battle. It is today, socially triumphant. Christ may prevail in the individual realm (that of the personal soul with its private joys and sorrows), but on the social arena He has been absolutely defeated. His armies do not today even pretend to carry on the fight. His ministers belong to the enemy. They have accepted the law of economics, and do not question it. The Catholic church alone has perceived the incompatibility of the Christ life with our economic system. Whom she wishes to unite with Christ, she first removes bodily from the economic system. Her priests, monks, nuns, holy orders, are set apart from the action of private property and the necessity for self-in-

terested exertion. The church saw that only so could they lead the life of Christ. He Himself could not lead the life He preached if He had to lead it in the midst of our present economic conditions.

I have said that economics as set over against Christ have conquered all along the line, and today reigns supreme throughout the world of every-day affairs. It has triumphed by its strength. It claims rest upon the first law of nature—self-preservation and the determination to persist. Christ offers peace, purity, love, consolation. But man needs more. Man does not live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God alone, but by bread. Moreover, bread he must have, and have now, while the word of God can be postponed—was postponed many hundreds of years. King Bread-and-Butter ruling over the anti-Christ realms of every-day life sits secure upon the throne because it is supported by the real palpable facts of actual necessity. Against such a bulwark the ministers of Christ spend their energies in vain. Their prayer and preachings blow against it like an idle wind against a wall of rock.

Look, reverend gentlemen, at the foundations of this wall. On it are prescribed the precepts which men really believe, not merely what they say they believe, or think they believe. You do not need to exhort them to these beliefs; every experience of their lives supports them.

These things they really do believe:

That it is well to be rich. Because wealth brings freedom, power, leisure, refinement, the means of culture, variety, pleasure, travel, books, society, sport, vacations, rest, generosity, wide interests. Through wealth you need bow to no man; you are relieved of sordid anxiety of the necessity for servility; you may choose your own time and place, you may develop yourself in your own way and live your own life. Independence—that ideal of every American, that heaven of individualist dreams—can be had only by those who pay for it.

Wealth, for a self-respecting man, means the power to be king over his own destiny; to fill his life to the full and enjoy it. To a woman, it means command over her own person, freedom to bestow her hand, to take care of herself, to preserve her freshness and elasticity, and to bloom out her life according to her nature.

Wealth means all these things, and over and against these

FACTS you have the faint droning of robed men in churches on Sundays and some visionary of eighteen hundred years ago (who lived in different times and different circumstances, and knew nothing about our life as it is today), who said something about "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," and "Woe unto ye that are rich."

No wonder that his sayings are not heeded! They are not applicable to the life of today; they are not practicable in the world of today. They are listened to with polite indifference and that drowsy patience which we usually accord to worthy, but tiresome, people, who don't know what they are talking about.

The same visionary, congregations are told, once said: "Blessed are the poor," and again the congregation drowsily droop their eyes, or perhaps sleepily reflect: "Blessed! the poor blessed!" They recall the actual condition of the poor. The want, the care, the oppression, and hard treatment, the grinding down of heart and soul, the crushing out of hope and self-respect, the physical deterioration, the dull anxiety, the constant dread of disaster, the restrictions, the sickening longing for the rest and freedom and the independence that will never come. The rags and dirt, the foul air and squalor, the disease and cold, the heat, the confinement, the misery. "Blessed! the poor blessed? Humph!

"Sell all thou hast and give to the poor." What is that? Give all ye have to the poor, and be poor ourselves? Not much. You don't sell your all, reverend sir, and give it to the poor. Why should we?

"Give to him that asketh." What, we wouldn't have a cent left in twenty-four hours. That is nonsense!

"Forgive your debtors." Impossible! Business could not be carried on in that way.

In short, Christ bade his followers do that which his followers today cannot do without serious economic complications.

I think this is a fact.

I think this fact has been established. I think this fact, being corroborated by daily human experience, has been so well established that society today does not doubt it. The fact that people still maintain churches and pay preachers to tell them to do that which they have not the slightest intention of doing, or even attempting

to do, and could not do if they wished, is one of the most astounding paradoxes of human history.

Ruskin, in his essay, "Unto This Last," after saying that "Nothing in history has ever been so disgraceful to the human intellect as the acceptance among us of the common doctrines of political economy," adds this wonderful sentence: "I know no previous instance in history of a nation's establishing a systematic disobedience to the first principles of its professed religion.

When I was a young man studying for the ministry it chanced that I mingled with the gayeties of my native town during a holiday vacation. One evening I was a passive listener while my sisters were discussing with some friends the eligibility of certain persons for "society," especially in regard to a certain dinner, which was to be very select and as fine as could be, and there was considerable zeal in their manifestoes as to who was likely to return social favors, and who should or should not be chosen for this great occasion. The next morning, as I sat in our family pew with my sister, our pastor arose and I was somewhat startled to hear him read solemnly this passage from Luke:

"When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbors, lest haply they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not wherewith to recompense thee."—Luke xiv, 12.

I looked at my sisters and at their young women friends within reach of my eye. On not a single face did I see a gleam of any indication that the fair listener perceived that anything had been said that had the remotest applicability to her. They sat quietly, with folded hands, and dreamy, far-away looks in their eyes, rippled by no change of expression.

It was a trifling incident, but it was the first time that I was ever overcome by a realizing sense of how Christ's teachings have faded away from our real existence. For a moment I was taken aback, and I must say that in after years I have often sadly recalled that first awakening moment.

I have referred to the fact that economics bluntly contradict Christ whenever he declares for poverty and against riches. Let

us see how it works toward persons who should try to follow literally His laws.

"Take no thought for tomorrow." If we should follow this we should starve, and we know it.

"Love thy neighbor as thyself." If we should follow this literally and practice it by opening wide our doors to share with our neighbors (as we would with ourselves) all our goods, we should have nothing in a short time. Our economic system has produced a horde of starvlings who can be kept back only by locks and bolts and police. Can we love them as we do ourselves? Humph!

"Turn the other cheek." There has been current among us for some time a curious sort of superstition about non-resistance, viz., that ferocity and greed can be disarmed by gentleness, and hate can be overcome by love. I know of a number of excellent people who believe—or think they do—that if you should throw yourself upon the mercy of the worst cut-throat known to criminal annals, and say: "Here I am, defenceless; strike if you will; here is all my wealth; take it if you will;" that somehow the miserable wretch would be overcome, the criminal's hand would fall powerless, his face softening into benevolence. Many people cling to this notion, though as a matter of fact I don't know anybody who dares put it to the test. Stanley tells of some English explorers in Africa who cherished this same delusion, and who put it to the test upon one occasion by ingeniously throwing themselves upon the honor of some native tribes. Whereupon, the native tribes promptly spitted them and twisted spears in their quivering flesh.

I know, as I say, a number of mystic Christians and non-resistant Tolstoians, but not one of them, I believe, would dare go to bed with his door unlocked in New York City—if the fact of the door being unlocked were widely known.

We all know in our hearts that the economic system under which we are living is producing men and conditions which make it very dangerous to obey Christ—so dangerous, in fact, that—with all due respect to him as a consoler, "Savior," and "Shepherd," and "Lamb of God," and so forth—we prefer not to run the risk.

"Do as you would be done by." Well, I know one man, an enthusiast, Samuel Jones, present mayor of Toledo, Ohio, if you wish to know his name, who has adopted this Golden Rule as his life motto in business, in private life, and in politics. He told me once

of some curious experiences he had had when he first began to practice this rule. Upon assuming office as mayor, one of his first duties was to enforce the law against gambling houses. The keeper of one of these, a friend of his (Mr. Jones considers all men his friends), familiarly known as "Rolling Charlie," was to be raided first. Acting upon this motto, the Golden Rule, Mr. Jones endeavored, he says, to "do as he would be done by," and hence proceeded to give a timely warning to "Rolling Charlie," to close his shop, and thus save disgrace, expense, etc. Of course, "Rolling Charlie" was duly grateful, and the Golden Rule was once more vindicated.

At this point I ventured timidly to ask Mr. Jones: "But the Golden Rule, does it not, enjoins that you should 'do to a person as you would that he should do to you?'"

"Certainly."

"That is, if you were in his place?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, what 'Rolling Charlie' surely 'would have had you do,' would have been not to shut up his dive at all. Your ordering it closed, whether you did it privately in a pleasant way, or publicly in a harsh way, was certainly not what he wanted. **It was not what you would have wanted if you had been in his place.** In other words, you did **not** do unto him as you would have wished him to do to you, had you been in his place. I concede that you did your duty, and acknowledge that you acted in support of law and order, but I insist that you did **not** act according to the Golden Rule."

My object was to make this excellent man see (which of course, however, I did not succeed in doing), that with the best intentions men cannot live the Golden Rule today and at the same time remain in the social systef as it is. Our economics, again, are constantly producing a larger class of persons who successfully prevent our leading the life indicated by any such maxim.

I will speak of divorce. And now I shall expect to be told that unhappy marriages, at any rate, are surely the result of individual vice and folly, that here at any rate the economic system cannot be blamed for that which is entirely to be laid at the door of the individual want of character. I am not so sure of that. I am sure that false economic relations lie at the bottom of many and many a marital and domestic wreck.

Economic conditions are making the struggle for a living more and more severe, and this is making the marriages occur later in life, where the chances of compatibility become smaller with every year of singleness. Again, young people of both sexes are prone, when they arrive at the pairing age, to fix their idolizing vision on some object out of their reach. They admire and love, with that first fresh love which is the best promise for happy life-mating, some one who moves in a higher sphere—is richer, better educated, more refined than they. Thwarted in this, they settle back into more or less commonplacedness, and when at last they mate with one of their own class, the first reverence is gone, secret comparisons are perpetually made and the love strong enough to weather domestic storms is wanting. I believe this is an underlying cause of married unhappiness, especially among the lower middle class, more frequently than is generally supposed. Again, economic conditions force husband and wife into long hours of different occupations and interests, so that they often never become truly acquainted, and the struggle for existence further hardens and dulls their sympathies. Among the well-to-do, the Mammon-worship engendered by our economic system which centers men's minds upon the possession of wealth, smothers love in a mad rush for display and luxury.

Economic conditions are bringing more and more women into the ranks of bread-winners, and while that may in the end result in a great gain to them and so to the race, at present the consciousness of this growing independence has the effect of making them more impatient of restraint, less compliant to domestic requirements and so more easily inclined to marital ruptures.

Economic conditions which make life sordid and dull have much to do with intemperance, as even professional temperance workers —who used formerly to attribute the desire for drink solely to natural depravity, the world, the flesh and the devil, and heaven knows what else—have come tardily and reluctantly to admit. Their grand argument was that poverty, the mother of misery, was the child of drink. They have come to acknowledge that in an appalling preponderance drink follows poverty instead of preceding it. Thus intemperance, one of the effects of economic poverty, is in its turn the cause of indescribable domestic wretchedness and one of the warrantable grounds for divorce.

We see, then, that King Economic System has produced conditions

which induce in many cases domestic misery—a misery so intense that society, not being able to bring itself to insist deliberately upon the continuance of it, grants relief when such is requested. What matters it to society that eighteen hundred years ago the nominal head of its religion (and incidentally the "Blessed Savior," who is to give "eternal life"), said very politely and emphaticallly, and repeated lest there should be any mistake, "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Whosoever shall put away his wife and shall marry another, committeth adultery." What does society care for Him and what He said? He didn't know about our present conditions. Against them His words are powerless. These conditions are facts; His words were—well, they are only words.

The Episcopal church in recent convention made an effort to conform its laws a little more nearly to the express command of Him whom she professes with hypocritical lips, to be the very Son of God. I need not say how the attempt failed. The Catholic church to be sure, here again, owing to her deeper personal hold upon her people, has been able to establish and maintain Christ's law regarding marriage. But the Protestant church, perhaps because it belongs more particularly to nations in whom the sway of economic law is more dominant, cannot follow their example.

And yet this question of inviolability of marriage is not one of the economic strongholds. It is comparatively a minor matter. How much less, then, could the church venture to hope to invade the economic reign of any of the more vital principles of its dominion? Vain to think of it.

There is not power enough in all Christ's church to set aside one of the principles upon which our economic system is founded. Could better proof be offered that He has been defeated? Verily, His word has not been fulfilled; the gates of hell have prevailed against Him.

"Swear not at all." Our economic system puts a premium upon lying. Our whole mercantile system is saturated with untruthfulness. So common has the habit of misrepresentation become that when it becomes necessary in a court of law, for instance, to induce a man to tell the truth, if possible, society is perplexed as to how to set about it. It fixes penalties for untruth on this occasion only (why should not **every** lie be perjury, in court or out?) and then, happily recollecting that the man may be susceptible to religious

fears, she enjoins upon him to lift his hand, kiss the Bible and take an oath. Thus society, acting upon his religious sense, induces him to do that which his religious prophet and Savior has precisely forbidden him to do! Atheists, I am told, are exempt from this requirement, and thus you have the paradox of the denier of Christ being allowed the privilege of obeying Christ's injunction—an injunction which, at the same time, His own followers systematically violate.

One more illustration of the incompatibility of economics and Christianity. When Christ was told that His mother and His brethren waited without to speak with Him, He said: "Who are my mother and my brethren?" and looking round upon those who sat with him, he said: "Behold my mother and my brethren." Now, it has not been disputed, so far as I know, that this was intended as a strong lesson that the ties of blood were not of first importance. It was a clear foreshadowing of that "brotherhood of man," which our friends, the reformers, talk so much about and so vehemently about nowadays. Christ resented the implication that He should be expected to rise and leave His friends at once, and rejoice more in the society of His family. His heart included all, and refused to be exclusive.

What does our economic system say to this? It, on the contrary, throws society into little groups, consisting of a warrior chief engaged in the fierce fight for bread with other heads of families, and behind each chief the little group of dependents dearer to him than all the world besides, so much dearer that in some cases—as I have known—a man would rather that a city full of people should be swallowed up by an earthquake than that his wife or his child should have the toothache or the whooping cough.

In women this narrowness of devotion is, I think, still more marked. We have all known wives who were less affected at hearing of the famine in India, or the chronic hunger of our own slums, than they would be of having their husband deprived of his favorite cut of steak at breakfast or that Johnnie's muffins should be scorched.

Is there any resemblance between this spirit with the warlike family groups built upon it, and Christ's "Behold, these are my mother and my brethren?"

Thus everywhere we see this opposition between Christ's teaching and the teaching of economics.

I am amazed at the general character of this paradox, I am utterly confounded when I seriously consider the part which ministers of the church play in it. They are educated men, sincere men, honest men, thoughtful men. Yet they stand in their pulpits, in their flowing robes, with uplifted hands, exhorting, begging, beseeching commanding their listeners to follow certain lines of conduct which they themselves do not follow, which their hearers will not follow, which they know that their hearers will not follow, which their hearers know that they know that they will not follow, which nobody has the slightest intention of following, or could follow if he would without bringing unavailing and useless suffering upon himself and those dependent upon him.

And yet the play goes on!

I have talked with several of my fellow clergymen on these subjects, and I have found a few who thought vaguely that there was some discrepancy or anachronism in the situation, which was rather unfortunate and which they hoped some day would be bettered.

I have found a few who seemed to realize that their efforts and those of the church were one long tragedy of failure. But I have scarcely found anyone who saw clearly and definitely the cause of their failure in the fact that Christ's social teaching and our economic system are absolutely incompatible. They are currents running in exactly opposite directions, and the economic current, receiving its force from the necessities of physical existence, is vastly the stronger of the two, has conquered and will always conquer so long as the two are opposed. In all cases where Christ's teachings run counter to economic possibilities, His teachings are powerless.

I say to my ministerial brethren: Reverend Sirs, if you care to continue this vain task of trying to make water run up hill against the force of gravity, I wish you well of the undertaking. If you can contemplate your failure up to this time without wishing to hide your heads in shame, I congratulate you on your boldness! I know well how many of you, sore at heart, return again to the consolation of charity and alms-giving—the only one of Christ's teachings which you have the slightest chance of getting obeyed. I have seen you satisfying your consciences and your bitter self-dissatisfaction by wringing with all your strength more doles from

the rich and handing them to the poor. I marvel at the blindness with which you do this. I marvel that you do not see that every dollar bestowed in almsgiving adds another brick to the wall that defends our present system and strengthens the barriers which now divide you from the fulfillment of Christ's law.

Man cannot live the social life which Christ taught under our present economic conditions. By urging them to do what they and you know is impossible, you weaken the influence of your calling. You are coming to be regarded with good natured tolerance as more or less interesting "talkers," paid to repeat certain phrases on certain occasions and to give interesting talks for an hour or so, but not to be taken seriously. You are becoming merely aesthetic and emotional servants of the people, paid to soothe and amuse them —nothing more.

To speak in the language of parables: "There was once a certain king, who, calling two of his soldiers, bade them take each a band of followers and go to a certain place where they should found a new kingdom according to his directions. So the two soldiers set out, and after a time they came to a forest, which was so thick with trees that they could not enter. And the first soldier, saying, "I have orders from my king to proceed, and these orders I must obey," set to work with his followers to cut down the trees and make their way through; but the second soldier sat himself down, with all his followers, at the edge of the forest and remained there many days. Though often he did bring forth the king's orders, which were to go forward and found a kingdom, and did read these orders to the people, yet he did not set to work to cut down the forest nor attempt to break through, and the forest grew thicker in time. At last, when the king came, he was very wroth with his weak soldier, but to the first, who had set valiantly to work to obey him, he gave much praise.

But I shall be asked: If this economic system is so dreadful a thing and opposes such barriers to Christian living, why is it that Christian people have not sought to change it?"

Why, indeed? There is no answer, save the fact of the mighty force of habit and tradition which makes nine hundred and ninety-nine persons accept the world just as they find it, and only provides one who, belonging to that restful leaven of the world—the reform element—can know no peace until he finds the secret of evil and

struggles toward remedy and progress. Besides this immense inertia of hereditary apathy, there are one or two illusions which perpetually cloud men's vision. One is that, as I have stated, they think that they believe that Christ was divine, while, as a matter of fact, they do not believe it. Another self-delusion is one which has been handed down as a dark legacy from the gloom of Calvanistic days—the theory which heaps mountains of responsibility without stay or compunction upon the single individual soul. This is the idea that a man's misfortunes are all his own fault. As I once heard a defender of this idea say: "If you see a drunkard lying in the ditch, don't help him out. The ditch is the proper place for him." This was an extreme statement and the charitable impulses of the (for to play Good Samaritan is almost the only one of Christ's rules which King Economics kindly permits us to amuse ourselves with) have largely gainsaid it. Nevertheless, there is a widespread notion that opportunity is general, education free, and if a man does not get on it is his own fault. We have come to minimize the power of environment beyond all reason. It has become almost a religious tenet to believe—or say that we do—that man has within himself all the power necessary to his full development. What ground have I in declaring that this is a self-delusion and that men do not actually believe it? Because in the individual cases where they are personally interested they do not act upon it. Every parent knows that if he wishes his child to grow up in truthfulness, honesty, etc., the child must be surrounded by an environment that will influence him to those ends. Men profess to believe that character is independent of surroundings; yet they well know that if they should put their own sons in dens of thieves and liars the boys would in all probability grow up thieves and liars. The best of them is open to all evil influences, even with a virtuous, hereditary start, and parents know it. All educators know it. All education proceeds upon the knowledge that environment is vastly powerful in influencing character. No one denies it, in fact, when it comes to the point of personal interest. It is only in the field of economics—that vast domain under the sway of the false spirit—that we pause helplessly and lay down our arms. In all other spheres of life we try to make righteousness easy (we reward children for well-doing and reprove them for ill; we threaten malefactors and punish criminals) save in the economic relation. Economic righteousness—("do unto others

as ye would that they should do to you;" "give to them that asketh;" "from him that would borrow turn not away;" "love thy neighbor as thyself;" "lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth," etc., etc.)—economic righteousness we not only do not make easy, but we make it impossible.

And yet, when you look about you, the ministers of Christ, standing before this economic forest that lies between us and the founding of that kingdom which our Savior enjoined, you will hardly see an arm uplifted, an axe at hand.

Another fallacy which has helped maintain the present position is that of the natural depravity of human nature. It is said that men are hard, selfish, mean, and that is the reason they do not obey Christ. A minister says to his flock, "Sell all thou hast and give to the poor;" "Give to every one that asketh;" "To him that taketh thy coat, offer thy cloak also;" then he raises his hand in benediction and sends them out of the church into the outer world, where, he knows perfectly well, they will do nothing of the kind. Now, he is supposed to believe, and possibly he himself supposes that he believes, that the reason why they will not obey his orders is because they are "hard of heart," selfish, naturally depraved, unregenerate.

In his heart of hearts the minister knows this is not the true reason. He knows that the mass of human beings wish to be good. They wish to be loved, respected, admired. They like to give pleasure; they have good will; they would like to be truthful; they admire courage and benevolence; they admire generosity; they praise good works; they adore heroes and benefactors; they never tire of cheering persons who have shown noble qualities; they are touched by disinterestedness; they mean well; they have much kindness.

They disobey you and your Christ, my reverend brethren, not from depravity and selfishness, but because you ask of them that which, under the economic circumstances (which you uphold), they cannot obey you without an economic risk which common sense and that self-preservation which is the first law of nature, makes utterly impracticable.

I ask you to consider for a moment what would happen if an economic system could be adopted which would work with Christ instead of against Him. Suppose an economic system in which men would find it for their interest to love ther neighbors as them-

selves, and to "give to them who asketh," where to add your cloak to him who had taken your coat, would be wise as well as kind; when the power of Mammon could be sufficiently weakened to give God a chance; where wealth were deprived of its abnormal power and poverty of its abnormal horrors; where it would neither be so fine to be rich nor so wretched to be poor, and where all the powers of society joined to those of human nature did not tempt men to seek the one and urge them to avoid the other.

I should like to organize the ministers of Christ into an army for this purpose. About one-fourth of all the members—I think one-fourth could do it—should be left as a home-guard to keep up the churches. For the churches must be kept up a while at any rate. They are bulwarks of law, order and respectability. Then again, they minister to those individual demands of their congregations (a large majority of whom, as we must remember, are women), called their "spiritual needs." By which is apparently meant the need which they experience of being told at least once a week that Christ loves them (which is gratifying); that he got himself crucified upon a cross for their benefit (which is touching); that they are the elect of the earth and their souls are immortal (which is very pleasant), and that all they are expected to do in return for all these nice things is to believe that they are true—especially to believe that Christ loves them, which, as all will agree, under the circumstances, is not difficult.

The remainder of Christ's army I would organize into a column of attack to advance upon our economic system. The first step would be to understand the situation. Of all persons in the world who ought to be bending their energies day and night to the study of economics, and to the bettering of economic conditions, those persons are the ministers of Christ's church. Let them beware of politics; let them refuse to be switched off into any minor "reforms," but let them address themselves earnestly to the question of pure economics—the production and distribution of the necessities of life —that business which is the main occupation of the vast masses of men—and see what can be done to make this present system over into one which shall admit the possibility of at least a move toward the building of that kingdom which the Master came to announce.

Economics for the next fifty years shall be the chief study of the church.

Lay, first, brethren, the economic foundation, and then you may erect the structure of Christ's social law. Until you have done this you cannot avail. You are wasting your breath.

Prepare the economic soil, and then you may plant the seeds of His social doctrine.

Make it possible for men—without committing economic suicide—to live the life which Christ commanded them to live, and you may yet convert them to Christianity.

And not until then.

THE FIRST LANDLORD.

In the hey-day of mankind, Adam went forth and gathered the fruits of the forest, unmolested by the trust or bothered with politics. Nature supplied his wants, and while there was much more than Adam could use, the cry of "over-production" found no echo in the land.

Adam became tired of roaming from place to place and he discovered that it was much more convenient to cultivate fields and harvest the ripened grain.

Other men imitated his example and thus husbandry was established as a regular vocation of mankind.

Adam, while resting in the shade of the Forbidden Tree, communed with the serpent Covetness, who slyly put a bug in his ear.

"Adam, you are foolish to wear your life away by working in the fields. A small portion of the crop of each of your neighbors would enable you to live in idleness and luxury."

This seemed easy, and Adam consulted his neighbors in regard to the matter.

"Go to," replied they, "you are strong and as able as we to work. Till your own fields."

Adam returned to the tree much troubled in mind at the perverseness of mankind.

The serpent was there and again whispered in his ear, at the same time giving him a playful dig in the ribless region.

With this inspiration, he got up and hastily donned his best suit of fig leaves. He called again on his nearest neighbor.

"My friend," said Adam, "the land you are using is mine by right of discovery. I was here first."

This doctrine seemed rather new and startling to the neighbor, but as Adam was about 25 pounds heavier and carried an innocent looking club, the neighbor agreed with him.

"Now," contnued Adam, magnanimously, "just stay on the land, and when you have harvested your crop, I'll take a third of it for the use of the land, and you can have the balance."

Thus did the landlord make his debut, and as the world wasn't big enough for the landlord and the Garden of Eden to do business in at the same time, Eden took a vacation.—F. D. W.

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